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ABSTRACT

This project identifies the competencies and knowledge required by elementary and secondary teachers to accommodate the needs of an inclusive classroom. Utilizing a literature review and the results of surveys completed by teachers who had been successful while teaching in inclusion classrooms, a 10-member focus group developed the following competencies to be added to the curricula of the teacher education programs: (1) knowledge of foundations of education for pupils with diverse needs; (2) knowledge of how pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavioral needs learn; (3) the ability to use appropriate assessment data to plan and implement instruction; (4) the ability to plan safe, positive, and supportive learning environments; (5) knowledge of principles and applications of instructional effectiveness; (6) competency in the processes needed to establish constructive pupil-teacher and pupil-pupil interpersonal relationships; (7) the ability to implement individual and group behavior management procedures; (8) knowledge of the principles related to the development of collaborative relationships with colleagues; (9) the ability to collaborate with parents; (10) knowledge of general management; and (11) the ability to cooperatively develop, implement, and evaluate individualized education and family service plans. (LL)

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# Competencies, Skills, and Knowledge Teacher Education Programs Need to Teach the Inclusion Teacher

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**Funded by Project Partnership: Restructuring Teacher Education to Meet the Needs of the Full Inclusion Classroom**

**The Teachers College**
**Emporia State University**
**Emporia, Kansas**



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**The Teachers College**
**Emporia State University**
**Emporia, Kansas**

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## Development of Competencies, Skills, and Knowledge for the Inclusion Teacher

A major goal of this project was to determine the competencies, skills, and knowledge needed by elementary and secondary teachers to work with students in an inclusive educational setting. To accomplish this goal, the following activities were completed:

1. A literature review on inclusion was conducted using ERIC, professional journals, and chapters from textbooks. This review included state standards such as current and proposed Kansas state standards for regular education and special education and standards from professional organizations such as the Division of Learning Disabilities and the Council for Exceptional Children.

2. From the literature review, an open ended pilot survey was developed to assess the competencies, skills, and knowledge needed by teachers in an inclusion classroom. This survey was completed by regular education teachers and special education teachers involved in inclusive classrooms.

3. The results of the survey were compiled and a more specific, longer survey was developed. School districts throughout Kansas, known for their inclusion programs, were contacted to identify teachers who had been very successful in developing and teaching in inclusion classrooms. The final survey was then completed by these educators.

4. A focus group consisting of 10 individuals (an inclusion coordinator, two principals, two regular education teachers, two special education teachers, a graduate assistant, and the two university coordinators of the grant) was formed. This focus group met five times. In addition, various members of the group visited successful inclusion classrooms around Kansas to observe the classroom in operation and to interview teachers and principals.

5. The focus group studied the results of the literature review, the two surveys, the interviews, and the observations to determine the competencies, skills, and knowledge needed by the inclusion teacher to be successful. These were compared to the proposed Kansas Special Education Teacher Standards so language would be comparable.

6. These competencies were prepared for university and college teacher training programs to add to their curriculum to accommodate the needs of the inclusive classroom.

**Recommended Competencies Skills and Knowledge**
**Needed By the Inclusion Teacher**
**Teacher Education - Elementary and Secondary**

1. **Acquire knowledge and expertise in the foundations of education for pupils* with diverse needs. The teacher preparation experience shall require students* to:**

   (A) **Discuss the shared and unique responsibilities of education for serving pupils with diverse needs.**

   (B) **Model the roles teachers, other professionals, and parents assume in a collaborative relationship in providing instruction and other services for all pupils.**

   (C) **Describe commonalities and differences among pupils with diverse needs in terms of characteristics, curricular approaches, transition, and post school status.**

2. **Demonstrate knowledge of how pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavioral needs learn. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:**

   (A) **Describe educational, developmental, functional, vocational, and social outcomes for pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavioral needs at various age levels.**

   (B) **Describe the biological and environmental impact of cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavioral needs on pupil's acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, and generalization of skills.**

   (C) **Demonstrate the curricular, instructional, and/or technological modifications/adaptations which can be made by educators to support pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavioral needs.**

   (D) **Select, modify, and adapt curriculum content and materials that engage pupils in meaningful, active, and applied learning experiences in areas such as academics, career preparations, and social competence.**

   (E) **Select media and technology appropriate to instructional goals and objectives (e.g. computer assisted technology, assistive technology).**

   (F) **Develop lesson plans and adapt curicula, materials, and methods for average and diverse pupils (i.e., gender, gifted to low functioning, various disabilities, high to low SES, varying learning styles, culturally and linguistically diverse, and social problems specific to the community [e.g. drugs, poverty, guns]).**

*Student refers to university students preparing to become teachers.
Pupil refers to those enrolled in preacademic, elementary, and secondary schools.

(G) Use task analysis and error pattern analysis to determine how to revise curriculum and instruction.

(H) Evaluate the roles of families in assisting pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and social/behavioral needs to meet desirable educational, social/emotional, vocational, developmental, and functional outcomes.

(I) Be aware of and describe the availability of interagency collaboration in planning behavior interventions and evaluate the roles of the variety of community services, agencies, and professionals who support pupils with diverse cognitive, motor, and/or social/behavioral needs and their families.

3. Demonstrate the ability to use appropriate assessment data to plan and implement instruction. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:

(A) Use assessment information to establish goals and objectives that are appropriate for an individual pupil.

(B) Use assessment information to provide a pupil with information about performance results for the purpose of developing self-evaluation skills and supporting progress.

(C) Collect, document, and analyze performance information through systematic observations and recordings of pupil learning, behavior patterns, and responses in the areas of social, developmental, functional, academic, and/or vocational behaviors.

(D) Determine instructional, functional, and developmental needs of pupils through the use of curriculum-based assessments and similar tools that allow for comparison of current performance with criterion outcomes.

(E) Develop formal and informal alternative types of assessments (e.g. portfolio assessment, curriculum based assessment).

4. Demonstrate the ability to plan safe, positive, and supportive learning environments. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:

(A) Designate areas for specific pupil activities.

(B) Use visual displays appropriate to instructional goals and objectives.

(C) Evaluate how differing physical arrangements (e.g. seating, traffic flow) support educational productivity.

(D) Demonstrate the skill of managing simultaneous curriculum activities.

(E) Demonstrate when and how to use large or small group instructional modes.

(F) Develop and implement a plan for involving parents in the instructional process.

5. **Demonstrate knowledge of principles of instructional effectiveness and the ability to apply these within a variety of models of teaching. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:**

(A) Maintain and communicate high, appropriate expectations for all pupils.

(B) Maximize the amount of time pupils engage in learning activities (ie. time on task).

(C) Provide pupils with opportunities to experience high success rates during acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, and generalization stages of learning.

(D) Provide pupils with frequent response opportunities, appropriate practice, and corrective feedback during all phases of instruction.

(E) Teach generalization of skills and transfer of knowledge.

(F) Assist pupils in developing learning strategies and independent study behaviors.

(G) Teach and model problem solving strategies for pupils.

(H) Teach and model critical thinking skills for pupils.

(I) Utilize research based exemplary practices for effective management of teaching and learning.

6. **Demonstrate competency in the processes needed to establish constructive pupil-teacher and pupil-pupil interpersonal relationships. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:**

(A) Demonstrate knowledge of cultural, social, affective, and other pupil variables as they affect interpersonal relationships.

(B) Model affective, positive behavior appropriate to specific circumstances (e.g. anger, affection, courtesy, humor, and honesty).

(C) Model effective communication skills including speaking, writing, and listening skills.

(D) Model effective and appropriate assertiveness.

(E) Model appropriate nonverbal communication skills.

(F) Create an appropriate environment to increase pupil self-awareness, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem.

7. **Demonstrate the ability to implement individual and group behavior management procedures. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:**

(A) Modify the learning environment to manage inappropriate behaviors.

(B) Develop a repertoire of strategies to increase appropriate or decrease inappropriate pupil behaviors.

(C) Involve parents and pupils in the establishment of behavioral programs, self-recording, and self-management.

(D) Demonstrate knowledge of how to return a behavior management program to naturally occurring consequences.

(E) Demonstrate strategies for crisis prevention/intervention.

(F) Demonstrate the ability to help pupils work and cooperatively interact with their peers.

8. **Acquire knowledge of the principles related to development of collaborative relationships with colleagues. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:**

(A) Model communication, consultation, collaboration, and problem-solving skills that can be used to develop instructional and management procedures for pupils.

(B) Communicate program needs, processes, and outcomes.

(C) Participate as a member of a transdisciplinary team in activities related to planning, implementing, and evaluating individualized instructional and related programs for a pupil.

(D) Demonstrate organizational skills.

(E) Demonstrate flexibility in teaching.

(F) Demonstrate a knowledge of stress management skills.

(G) Demonstrate conflict resolution skills.

(H) Demonstrate knowledge of peer coaching skills.

**9. Acquire knowledge to collaborate with parents in planning and implementing instructional, transitional, and related programs. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:**

**(A) Model consultation, collaboration, and communication skills that can be used in individual and group conferences.**

**(B) Develop a plan to collaborate with regular education teachers, special education teachers, and parents in developing methods for implementing a school-center or home-based teaching and management plan for their child.**

**(C) Demonstrate knowledge of how to encourage and assist families to become active participants in the educational team.**

**10. Acquire knowledge of general management, supervisor, and regulatory functions. The teacher preparation experience shall require students to:**

**(A) Describe the roles and utilization of paraprofessionals and volunteers in an instructional program.**

**(B) Demonstrate the ability to work with and supervise paraprofessionals in an instructional program.**

**(C) Describe local educational agency policies and procedures for providing special education and related services.**

**11. Cooperatively develop, implement, and evaluate an individualized education program/individualized family service plan/individualized transition plan.**